

Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs

1995 Nobel Peace Prize

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Statement on Avoiding a Re-Start of the Nuclear Arms Race

1 January 2017

The Pugwash Conferences for Science & World Affairs and its co-founder Joseph Rotblat were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1995 because of, as the citation read, “their efforts to diminish the part played by nuclear arms in international politics and, in the longer run, to eliminate such arms.”

The Pugwash Conferences are founded on the desire to see all nuclear arms destroyed. We are particularly concerned about ideas and rumors that propose a restart of the nuclear arms race among the major nuclear powers, and even a restart of nuclear tests. This will increase the nuclear dangers, induce other nuclear powers to acquire more nuclear weapons, and possibly induce non-nuclear states to acquire them. We appeal to the people of the world to voice their opinion and prevent any return to a cold war mentality, and possibly to a crisis of the nonproliferation regime.

We draw some comfort from the fact that on December 23, 2016 the General Assembly of the United Nations approved the resolution recommended to it in October by its First Committee on Disarmament and International Security to start negotiations in 2017 on a treaty banning nuclear weapons. This resolution was adopted by a large majority, with 113 UN member states voting in favour, 35 voting against and 13 abstaining.

We urge all Governments, civil society, and the people to exert all efforts to regain the momentum of moving towards a nuclear-weapon-free world as the negotiations on this resolution begin between March 27-31, 2017.

Jayantha Dhanapala, President of Pugwash
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